

Montpelier Design Review Committee
April 27, 2010
City Council Chambers, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Stephen Everett, Chair; James Duggan, Vice-Chair; Nancy Mears and Miriam Conlon.
Staff: Clancy DeSmet, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Stephen Everett, at 5:30 P.M.

- I. 161 Barre Street – CB-II/DCD**
Applicant/Owner: Lescha Carpenter
Two decks at the rear of building.

Mr. Everett explained the advisory role of the Design Review Committee to the Development Review Board to the applicant and asked her to explain her project to the committee.

Ms. Carpenter explained her proposal is to put on a two-level deck. She owns a duplex on Barre Street and wants to have a deck off the back of each unit which will also provide a second egress to each apartment. At the moment they only have one each. There will be stairs from the ground level to the first story deck and then for the second story stairs from the first level to the second level.

Mr. Everett said it looks like it is a picture of a door rather than a window. Is that going to be changed?

Ms. Carpenter replied that would be a double French door to replace one of the windows that is currently on the back side.

Mr. Everett asked if there was any intention to do anything with the window.

Ms. Carpenter said they would cover it over with the same siding that is on the building now. The hope is that in time to refurbish the whole outside of the building and reroof it and paint it.

Mr. Everett asked if it would be a single glass door or a double atrium or slider.

Ms. Carpenter said the door would be double but not a slider, just a one side fixed atrium with one side fixed and one side operable. There would be one on the first floor as well as the second floor.

Mr. Everett said if you are dropping the stair down to the landing she can't have a door opened because of the stairs.

Ms. Carpenter replied that is true.

Mr. Everett said there would be a double atrium door on the right window on the top floor.

Ms. Carpenter said they thought it might be easier to use a single door downstairs.

Ms. Conlon asked where the door on the second level was.

Ms. Carpenter said it would be on the far side.

Mr. Everett said there would be a double door on the top floor to replace a door and down below in the middle there would be a single door. He asked what their plans were for the railings. Are they going to do railings to match the individual spindles and decks on either side of her, or is it going to be solid?

Ms. Carpenter said it wouldn't be solid. It would be spindles.

Mr. said it would be a 2 x 2 spindle on no greater than a 4 inch space according to code. It would be pressure treated like the deck.

Ms. Mears said they would need some railings around the sides.

The contractor said there is a revised drawing with railings which went to the Building Inspector.

Ms. Carpenter said she was looking into a spiral stair to maybe save some space.

Mr. Duggan said it would probably be a better solution because they will lose part of the window in the corner.

Mr. Everett said depending upon what type of stair they would need they would also have to have a railing around the stairwell as well as on the outside walls. It would have to be the same railing design to enclose the stairwell.

Ms. Mears asked if they were just providing this egress because they want to and not because they have been told they need to provide it.

Ms. Carpenter said she hasn't been told by anyone she needs it. She has only owned the building for 9 months and there are a lot of code issues she is hoping to address.

Ms. Mears said typically a spiral stair doesn't qualify for a code egress. She should check to see what the code compliance is before she does it.

The contractor said there are a few spiral staircases on Barre Street and they are being used as fire escapes.

Mr. Everett said he would just indicate that a spiral stair design is an acceptable alternative subject to code requirements. There is nothing worse than spending the money for one and then finding out later you need to take it out.

Ms. Carpenter said they should also note they thought they originally would need a variance to have the deck go all the way to the end of the building because of the need for 5 feet between structures. They re-measured and it turns out it is clear.

Mr. Everett asked what type of lighting they were adding to the back side. There will have to be some lighting back there if it is an egress.

Ms. Carpenter said there is already some exterior lighting.

Mr. Everett asked if they built the deck is there lighting up above in the eaves.

Ms. Carpenter said they would run it up to the second floor.

Mr. DeSmet said the DRC considers those exterior changes so all of the exterior changes are supposed to be mentioned, including the siding, windows and doors.

The contractor said if you are looking at the first floor deck, where the deck would actually come into the house there is a light there on the outside. Then, there is another light over in the corner for the stairs. The light would be out on the deck.

Mr. Everett said they would allow them to put a wall mounted light fixture outside of each new door to be installed. Those lights at the stairs could be switched.

Mr. Carpenter said the lights on the stairs are on a sensor.

Mr. Everett said that is good because then if someone is coming down the stairs and they have to turn the corner for the stairs, then the sensor picks them up and the light will come in. A light fixture outside of each new door may be installed. They could use a single or double flood light with a 50 watt bulb. Those lights could be either a wall mount with a regular bulb or a flood unit with a 50 watt maximum. The 6 x 6 posts standard framing, the decking will be pressure treated or Trax.

The contractor said it would all be pressure treated lumber. It costs less.

Mr. Everett said one thing they may want to consider on the outside stairs. If you look at the design of the building, if they notice the abutter to the east there is a roof that extends out over and their particular location if they extended a roofline from below the window down over the decking and come out to match the existing corner they would never have to shovel it in the window. That would protect the stairway. The second option is where the stairs are coming down and are uncovered they might want to consider using wood treads or a galvanized steel tread that is slotted. They would never have to shovel because the snow falls through it.

Ms. Mears said she doesn't think the stair design works and they won't cover the stairs with a roof. If they are going to do a spiral they should figure out what is the vertical distance between there. If there is a 7 inch riser, there will probably be 14 risers in there that won't fit with that design. If you are going to do a spiral stair you should work out how it will work and if it fits in that space.

Mr. Everett said they could look at bringing this back as far as you can so the stairs going down don't interfere with the doorway down below. If they bring this back a little further they can gain a couple of treads there. On the landing if it has at least 2 or 3 transition stairs around it would work better.

Ms. Mears said there are all of these codes that go around egress stairs.

The contractor said he was looking at the code for interior stairs.

Ms. Carpenter said the intention is to make it to comply in the event they are asked to comply by the Building Inspector.

Mr. Duggan said the lower stair could also be moved to access another way so it would let you to bring the stairs down because you would need a flat landing.

Mr. Everett said as part of the application it should clarify some of the things he has indicated:

1. At the second level of the proposed deck they proposed a double atrium door. He could either do a double or single, whichever fits when he is finished with his design. A double atrium door or a single full glass door will be installed in place of the eastern most window for access to deck.
2. The window will be in filled with clapboard siding to match the existing siding on the house.
3. Deck construction uses 6 x 6 pressure treated vertical posts with pressure treated framing and pressure treated 5 quarter by 6 inch, which is a standard pressure treated decking.

The contractor asked if it would help to have the price list from East Montpelier.

Mr. Everett said that is a standard pressure treated material for decking. The deck railing will consist of the 6 x 6 pressure treated posts with pressure treated railings and 2 x 2 pressure treated spindles, and then spindle spacing and rail height to meet codes. Railings around stairwell to match deck railing. A spiral stair design is acceptable alternative subject to code requirements. Wall mounted light fixtures may be installed outside of each proposed doorway on to the deck. It is the applicant's option to install roof over second level of the deck to match pitch and proportion of the dwelling roof adjacent. Lastly, the stair treads may be either pressure treated wood or galvanized steel. They are a slotted tread and used frequently around town because they require no maintenance. They are slotted so you don't ever have to shovel snow off of them or try to remove ice from a wooden tread.

Mr. Everett said the second level of proposed deck a double atrium door or single full glass door will be installed in place of the eastern most window for access to the deck. At the first level of the proposed deck a single full glass door will be installed in the center window position.

Mr. Duggan asked if they wanted to give the option on the second floor if they need more room to bring the stairs that it would be a single.

Mr. Everett said a double atrium door or a single full glass door would be installed and they can adjust that depending on where the stairs go and it will give a little more flexibility. The second level center window opening will be in filled with clapboard siding to match the existing siding on the house. Deck construction uses 6 x 6 vertical posts with standard pressure treated framing and pressure treated 5 quarter x 6 decking. Deck railing will consist of 6 x 6 pressure treated posts with pressure treated railings and 2 x 2 pressure treated spindles, spindle spacing and rail height obviously to meet building codes. Railing around the stairwells will match the deck railings. The spiral stair design is acceptable as an acceptable alternative subject to building code requirements. Wall mounted light fixtures may be installed outside of each proposed doorway on the deck with 60 watt max bulbs. It is the applicant's option to install a roof over the second level of the deck to match the pitch and proportion of the dwelling roof to that. The stair treads may be either pressure treated wood or galvanized steel slotted treads.

Mr. Duggan asked if they planned on any landscaping.

The contractor replied just the sonotubes and paving. There is no yard there.

Ms. Carpenter said they may have overlooked something regarding another project. They realize they have to replace a window as part of the renovations. It is in the front of the house. The current window goes slightly below where the new countertops are going to be so they need to install one about 6 inches shorter.

Mr. DeSmet replied they would have to come back for that.

Ms. Carpenter said they haven't cut any of the window out yet.

Mr. Duggan asked if they wanted to table the application until they come back about the window.

Mr. Everett said it is hard for the committee to make a decision without a picture of it so they can how the geometry affects the rest of the house.

Mr. Duggan asked if the window is on the front façade.

Ms. Carpenter replied yes.

Mr. Everett asked if the countertop was proposed to go by the window.

Ms. Carpenter said they are doing a kitchen renovation and installing all new counters.

The contractor said there is a window that is full length so the countertop cuts into the middle of the window that is there now.

Mr. Everett asked if there was any way to design the countertop around the window.

Ms. Carpenter said it is also not an ideal window. It is like a pair of double hung windows and they want a fixed kitchen window.

Mr. Everett said they could table the application and they could come back and add it to the project, which would be the next meeting, or they could approve the application as it is now but then they would have to make another separate application for the window. Because it is in the Historic District anything they do on the outside of the building other than replacing exact with exact, if they make any changes on the exterior of the building, they are supposed to come back and get it approved.

Mr. DeSmet said if they table this application and revise the materials and add the window to it they could come before the DRC on May 11th. From just a pragmatic standpoint the Development Review Board without revised drawings might not even understand or consider the application. They might want to table it knowing what this committee has suggested on the rear and the deck.

Mr. Duggan asked if they had talked to Glenn Moore, the Building Inspector.

Ms. Carpenter said he is actually inspecting tomorrow on the building project.

Mr. Duggan said they should ask him about what code requirements they will be held to for the stairs and come up with the final plan.

The contractor said on the new drawings for the deck he would have to draw in spindles instead of solid.

Ms. Mears said he wouldn't have to draw in all of them but give an indication.

Mr. DeSmet said the DRC needs to know what materials they are using, including the door, etc. A list of the deck material would be useful. A copy of the window they want to install would be helpful.

Mr. Everett said they also need a picture of the front of the house to see where the window is. Windows are an essential character of these buildings. The design criteria have to do with the integrity of the building, and part of that are the rhythm of the windows and the design of the building. There is a rhythm to a lot of historic buildings that if you start changing windows and things it disrupts that. At the applicant's request the DRC can table this until May 11th and they can come back with the additional materials as well as a picture of the front of the building and what they want to do with the front window. If they can find some outside lights they would like to put beside the doorways it would be helpful to see them also.

Mr. DeSmet told them to come see him after they meet with the Building Inspector and he will give them a copy of what Steve Everett has written down.

Mr. Everett said the application will be tabled until May 11th.

Review of April 13, 2010 Minutes:

Mr. DeSmet said there aren't enough people to approve the minutes.

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Mr. Duggan and Mr. Everett the DRC adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Clancy DeSmet
Planning and Zoning Administrator